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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004458

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TAGS: [PREL](#), [PGOV](#), [PINS](#), [PHUM](#), [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S SOUTHEAST: POLITICAL TRENDS, PKK, KURDISH CONSCIOUSNESS

Classified By: (U) Polcounselor John Kunstadter; reasons: E.O. 12958 1. 4 (b,d).

1. (U) This is a Consulate Adana cable.

2. (C) Summary: Southeast Turkey human rights contacts and likely post-DEHAP Kurdish political activists paint different, but equally discouraging, pictures of the region's political trajectory. Longtime Diyarbakir human rights contacts said that they were proud to be able to see the use of more Kermanji (the main form of Kurdish) in public life, but said that the visuals of the mother tongue debate were undermined by a clear AKP government disinterest in any further democratic reform. Meanwhile they said that they saw little at work in the region's ever more polarized political dynamic which could bring about an end to clashes before winter storms arrive. Initial meetings with newly-elected Democratic Society Movement members revealed an entrenched, outspoken pro-PKK sympathy with strong familial and cultural links to the terrorist group. End Summary.

3. (C) AMCON Adana PO met July 26 with Sezgin Tanrikulu and members of the Diyarbakir Bar Association. The group displayed a new banner written in Kermanji (the main form of Kurdish in Turkey) calling for regional residents to come and report cases of past abuse, mystery killings and unexplained disappearances. They explained that the banner and many posters like it were being put up with an EU grant which also would underwrite a group of ten lawyers and about 20 staff to document such cases for systematic investigation. They said that the effort had encountered no resistance from the AKP government. They acknowledged that few could actually read the Kermanji text, but that "everyone will know what it says and that it is important that the Bar Association, a semi-governmental organization, has been allowed to use Kermanji like this." Asked about the closing of most Kurdish language schools in the SE region, the bar association members said that the schools were financially insolvent and most of those who wanted their children or family to study could not afford the tuition. They also said that government insistence not to recognize the schools' diplomas as educational accomplishments had undermined their value. "The real answer is teaching Kurdish in public schools here, not a TRT broadcast or something from these small schools. Public life has to be conducted in Kurdish, in municipalities, schools, government offices, police stations and businesses," said the bar association vice president.

4. (C) The bar association members said that the AKP government was not interested in further democratic reform, such as mother tongue issues, or enforcing most of the recently-passed laws. They said that torture cases had diminished significantly and lawyer access was much improved, but that procedural changes were not used in practice. They pointed out that police, rather than prosecutors, still conduct post-arrest investigations, judges do not listen to defense cases, Kurdish cannot be used in electoral periods and police insist on attending client-attorney meetings in some cases, particularly national security cases. Worse yet, they argued, was new draft "counter-terrorism" criminal law that would extend "some of the worst legal practices from the emergency law (OHAL) period of southeast Turkey in the 1990's to the entire country with almost no systematic checks and balances on police and prosecutor authority."

5. (C) Asked about increasing clashes and regional political trends, the bar associations contacts said that there was much discouragement in the air. They repeated the disinterest of the government in reform, said DEHAP was expected to be banned soon, offered that the membership of the new Democratic Society Movement (DTH) was "even more radical than DEHAP and supports the PKK closely," and there was little which could be done to check the dynamic of force and counterforce in the provinces in SE Turkey outside Diyarbakir. They also said that "many people in the country are going back to the hills, saying it is their duty to do so. It is very discouraging," Tanrikulu said. Asked about the impact on the community of the killing of former PKK official Hikmet Fidan, the bar association members said that it had been very unsettling to many in Diyarbakir, they felt that the police sensed this and, opportunistically, were being slow to investigate the case, sensing how it was

keeping the community on edge. All said that it was still unclear who may have killed Fidan, but that, were investigations to suggest the PKK, DTH and the former DEP deputies who started the DSM movement were unlikely to denounce the act.

16. In Adana and Sanliurfa meetings, AMCON Adana PO met with five new DTH members to sound out their political agenda. Discussions on the margins of the DTH meetings with DEHAP figures confirmed PO's impressions that the new group members, admittedly just five of what they say are 400 who have been elected nationwide, are politically inexperienced, very pro-PKK, stridently demanding of mother tongue rights, fuzzy about market economics and unclear about their actual electoral ambitions. One new DTH member in Sanliurfa even proudly boasted to PO that he would soon travel to northern Iraq with a Kurdish intellectual and "visit with friends and countrymen in Kandil mountain (the PKK's main base area in n. Iraq)." Meetings with both DTH and DEHAP also made clear that they consider the banning of DEHAP inevitable and likely in the near future.

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